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NSC BRIEFING

**SOVIET NOTE ON GENEVA TALKS**

- I. Yesterday USSR announced that it "cannot send its experts" to technical talks in Geneva "because it does not wish to take part in deceiving the peoples." It would like to receive from US govt confirmation that meeting of experts must be subordinated "to solving the problem of cessation of tests as "determined in correspondence" between the US and USSR.
  - A. This statement seems to be a direct contradiction of Tuesday's Soviet note which agreed to talks and merely said that the experts conference "should aid in the most rapid cessation of tests."
- II. This change of attitude seems to rule out any worthwhile technical exchange at Geneva. If Soviets show up at all, we think it will be to try a political play- to convince world opinion that US is not interested in cessation of nuclear tests.
  - A. We do not rule out the possibility they may now be looking for an excuse to resume testing.
- III. The big question is why this abrupt shift--unprecedented in recent years. We have no good answer yet.
  - A. Nothing happened that we know of between Tuesday and Wednesday that would cause it.
  - B. However, it is of a piece with the <sup>"hard"</sup> ~~hard~~ Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe which has recently developed. There have also been recent actions which seem to blur the image of "peaceful coexistence" which USSR has long been cultivating.

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1. Charges last April that US bombers carry nuclear weapons toward Soviet borders and veto of Arctic inspection plan.

2. Attacks on Embassys in Moscow.

C. <sup>OK</sup> ~~On~~ initial view, therefore, is that the forces in the presidium which have been pushing for a harder line in external relations have won a <sup>sudden political</sup> victory directly involving the summit negotiations.

1. Although Khrushchev might be on the losing side--he has a personal stake in the summit campaign and had one in the more lenient policy toward Eastern Europe--his views on domestic policy and appointments <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ obviously dominant as late as last week and we still think he's running the show.

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